

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for warning the driver of a motor vehicle (12), an object detector (3) being provided, which detects preceding vehicles (13) and their distance (d) and relative velocity ( $v_{rel}$ ) with respect to the host vehicle (12) and supplies these to an evaluation device (1), wherein, on the assumption that the preceding vehicle (13) performed a deceleration ( $a_1 < 0$ ) and as a function of the driver's reaction time ( $t_R$ ) and of the host vehicle's maximum possible vehicle deceleration ( $a_0$ ), the evaluation device (1) ascertains whether a collision with the preceding vehicle (13) would be avoidable and a driver warning device (9, 10, 11) can be activated in the event that a collision is unavoidable.
2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the reaction time ( $t_R$ ) of the driver is determined by averaging reaction times from previous driving situations in which a driver reaction was required.
3. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the reaction time ( $t_R$ ) of the driver is a predetermined value.
4. The method as recited in Claim 3, wherein the driver of the vehicle (12) is personally able to specify the reaction time ( $t_R$ ) using a control element (5).
5. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein the driver warning is issued by an acoustic and/or visual signal (9).

6. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein the driver warning is issued by reversible belt tensioners (10) in that these are pretensioned once or several times.
7. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein the driver warning is issued by a brief triggering of the deceleration means (11).
8. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein the driver warning is issued by a haptic accelerator pedal and/or in the form of a vibration of the steering wheel.
9. A device for warning the driver of a motor vehicle (12), an object detector (3) being provided, which detects preceding vehicles (13) and their distance (d) and relative velocity ( $v_{rel}$ ) with respect to the host vehicle (12) and supplies these to an evaluation device (1), wherein, on the assumption that the preceding vehicle (13) performed a deceleration ( $a_1 < 0$ ) and as a function of the driver's reaction time ( $t_R$ ) and of the host vehicle's maximum possible vehicle deceleration ( $a_0$ ), the evaluation device (1) ascertains whether a collision with the preceding vehicle (13) would be avoidable and issues a driver warning via a driver warning device (9, 10, 11) in the event that a collision is unavoidable.
10. The device as recited in Claim 9, wherein a visual and/or acoustic signaling device (9) is provided as a driver warning device.

11. The device as recited in Claim 9 or 10,  
wherein a reversible belt tensioner (10) is provided as a  
driver warning device.
12. The device as recited in one of Claims 9 through 11,  
wherein the vehicle deceleration devices (11) are  
provided as a driver warning device.